

**What is Claimed:**

1. A computer-readable medium with computer-readable instructions for a hardware/software interface system for a computer system, wherein said hardware/software interface system manipulates a plurality of discrete units of information pertaining to an image and having properties understandable by said hardware/software interface system ("Items").
2. The computer-readable medium of claim 1 wherein said hardware/software interface system comprises an image schema to define at least one of an image Item and at least one of an image property.
3. The computer-readable medium of claim 2 wherein at least one of an Item in the image schema is a foundational Item, constituting a foundational Item type, from which all other image Items manipulated in the hardware/software interface system are derived.
4. The computer-readable medium of claim 3 wherein said foundational image Item type comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a rating; a size, wherein size constitutes the width or height of the image in pixels; an image bit depth; a color space; a version of a color space; a number of times said image has been printed; a region of interest in said image; a history pertaining to said image; a digital negative identification; a collection of links to other versions of the same image; and a metadata lifecycle for an image.
5. The computer-readable medium of claim 2 wherein at least one of a property in the image schema is a property for a region of said image, the region property comprising fields for the left, top, right, and bottom coordinates of said region.

6. The computer-readable medium of claim 5 wherein at least one of a property in the image schema is a property for a region of interest of said image, the region of interest property comprising a field for a region.
7. The computer-readable medium of claim 6 wherein said region of interest property of said image further comprises a field for a principal (e.g., a person).
8. The computer-readable medium of claim 6 wherein said region of interest property of said image further comprises a field for a confidence.
9. The computer-readable medium of claim 2 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to a principal Item (e.g., a person).
10. The computer-readable medium of claim 2 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to an event Item.
11. The computer-readable medium of claim 2 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to a location Item.
12. The computer-readable medium of claim 3 wherein said hardware/software interface system comprises a photo schema to define at least one of an photo Item and at least one of an photo property, and wherein said photo Item type is an extension of an image Item type.
13. The computer-readable medium of claim 12 wherein at least one of an Item in the photo schema is a foundational Item, constituting a foundational Item type, from which all other photo Items manipulated in the hardware/software interface system are derived.
14. The computer-readable medium of claim 13 wherein said foundational photo Item type comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a date said photo

was taken; said date a photo was acquired; a unique identification of an acquisition session for said photo; an orientation; a location; an event; a make of a camera; a model of a camera; an exposure time; an aperture; an ISO speed; an indication of whether a flash was used for said photo; an indication of whether a red-eye mode was used for said photo; an exposure mode; and a distance of the subject of said photo.

15. The computer-readable medium of claim 3 wherein said hardware/software interface system comprises an analysis properties schema to define at least one analysis property (AP) of a photo Item and at least one of an AP property, and wherein said photo Item type is an extension of an image Item type.

16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15 wherein said AP comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a color histogram; a gray histogram; and a similarity index.

17. A system for manipulating a plurality of discrete units of information pertaining to an image and having properties understandable by a hardware/software interface system ("Items"), said method comprising an image schema to define at least one of an image Item and at least one of an image property, where said image Item in the image schema is a foundational Item, constituting a foundational Item type, from which all other image Items manipulated in the hardware/software interface system are derived.

18. The system of claim 17 wherein said foundational image Item type comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a rating; a size, wherein size constitutes the width or height of the image in pixels; an image bit depth; a color space; a version of a color space; a number of times said image has been printed; a region of interest in said image; a history pertaining to said image; a digital negative identification; a collection of links to other versions of the same image; and a metadata lifecycle for an image.

19. The system of claim 17 wherein at least one of a property in the image schema is a property for a region of said image, the region property comprising fields for the left, top, right, and bottom coordinates of said region.
20. The system of claim 17 wherein at least one of a property in the image schema is a property for a region of interest of said image, the region of interest property comprising a field for a region.
21. The system of claim 17 wherein said region of interest property of said image further comprises a field for a principal (e.g., a person).
22. The system of claim 17 wherein said region of interest property of said image further comprises a field for a confidence.
23. The system of claim 17 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to a principal Item (e.g., a person).
24. The system of claim 17 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to an event Item.
25. The system of claim 17 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to a location Item.
26. The system of claim 17 wherein said hardware/software interface system comprises a photo schema to define at least one of an photo Item and at least one of an photo property, and wherein said photo Item type is an extension of an image Item type.

27. The system of claim 17 wherein at least one of an Item in the photo schema is a foundational Item, constituting a foundational Item type, from which all other photo Items manipulated in the hardware/software interface system are derived.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein said foundational photo Item type comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a date said photo was taken; said date a photo was acquired; a unique identification of an acquisition session for said photo; an orientation; a location; an event; a make of a camera; a model of a camera; an exposure time; an aperture; an ISO speed; an indication of whether a flash was used for said photo; an indication of whether a red-eye mode was used for said photo; an exposure mode; and a distance of the subject of said photo.

29. The system of claim 27 wherein said hardware/software interface system comprises an analysis properties schema to define at least one analysis property (AP) of a photo Item and at least one of an AP property, and wherein said photo Item type is an extension of an image Item type.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein said AP comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a color histogram; a gray histogram; and a similarity index.

31. A method for a hardware/software interface system to manipulate a plurality of discrete units of information pertaining to an image having properties understandable by said hardware/software interface system (an “image Item”), said method comprising:

establishing an image schema to define at least one of an image Item and at least one of an image property; and

establishing an Item in the image schema as a foundational Item, constituting a foundational Item type, from which all other image Items manipulated in the hardware/software interface system are derived.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein said foundational image Item type comprises at least one property from among the following group of properties: a rating; a size, wherein size constitutes the width or height of the image in pixels; an image bit depth; a color space; a version of a color space; a number of times said image has been printed; a region of interest in said image; a history pertaining to said image; a digital negative identification; a collection of links to other versions of the same image; and a metadata lifecycle for an image.

33. The method of claim 31 wherein at least one of a property in the image schema is a property for a region of said image, the region property comprising fields for the left, top, right, and bottom coordinates of said region.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein at least one of a property in the image schema is a property for a region of interest of said image, the region of interest property comprising a field for a region, a field for a principal (e.g., a person), or a field for a confidence.

35. The method of claim 31 wherein said image Item has a relationship (e.g., a link) to a principal Item (e.g., a person), to an event Item, or to a location Item.

36. The method of claim 31 further comprising, in order to represent a geographic location where a photographic digital image Item (a Photo) was taken, establishing a Relationship (a Location Relationship) between said Photo and a location Item (a Location) corresponding to said geographic location, such that said Photo can be queried based on said Location.

37. The method of claim 36 further comprising, in order to represent a geographic location where a photographic digital image Item (a Photo) was take, setting a location property (LocProp) on said Location Relationship to correspond to said geographic location.

38. The method of claim 31 further comprising, in order to represent at least one person in a photographic digital image Item (a Photo), establishing a Relationship between said Photo and an

Item pertaining to said person (a Contact), such that said Photo can be queried based on said Contact.

39. The method of claim 31 further comprising, in order to represent at least one event represented in a photographic digital image Item (a Photo), establishing a Relationship between said Photo and an Item pertaining to said event (an Event), such that said Photo can be queried based on said Event.

40. The method of claim 31 further comprising establishing a Relationship from a first digital image Item (an Image) to a second Image that is either (a) a parent Image from which said first Image is derived or (b) a child Image that has been derived from said first Image.

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